

2020

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT
FOR FARMERS &
AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCERS

**Maryland Farmers
Market Association**

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Social media glossary

Key words to know when thinking about social media

AUDIENCE REACH

The number of unique users who have seen content from your business.

BOOST

Advertising on Facebook and Instagram that will show your posts to people who might not otherwise see them.

CONTENT

Anything you share on social media. This includes text, pictures, graphics, videos, and links.

COMMENT

A user's response to content, usually displayed below the original post.

ENGAGEMENT

Any action that somebody takes on your content. This includes likes, shares, clicks, and comments.

HASHTAG

A word or phrase preceded by the # sign that can take a user to all other posts with the same hashtag. This helps users discover new content that interests them.

INFLUENCER

People who have built a reputation on social media for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts (sometimes in exchange for money or goods) about that topic on their social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views.

LIKE

The main way that users show interest or support content on Facebook and Instagram (and other platforms).

MENTION

The act of tagging another user's social media account in a post or comment, typically by using the @ symbol followed by the user's name.

POST

A single piece of content on social media.

SHARE

Act of reposting somebody else's content to your own social media account.



How to grow your community through online marketing

Social media is a free way to engage current shoppers, attract new ones, create awareness of your brand and mission, and grow your business. That being said, farmers need another thing to do like a fish needs a bicycle! This guide takes into account current developments in social media and provides farmers and agricultural producers with a stripped-down and streamlined toolkit to getting the most out of social media on an extremely tight time budget. While the intended audience is farmers, this guide might be useful for farmers market managers, makers, and small businesses.



#PROTIP

In an ideal world, you would share different content on Facebook and Instagram. But with serious time constraints, cross-posting from Instagram to Facebook is a time-efficient way to keep the content fresh on both of your accounts.



Pick a platform

Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube are all great social media platforms, but it is not realistic for anyone, let alone farmers, to be active on all of them.

MDFMA recommends that you focus on just Facebook and Instagram for the following reasons:

- Facebook is the most widely used social media platform in the world and allows you to reach the widest range of users. There's a good chance that you already have a Facebook account—there are farms out there that do not have websites and use Facebook as their only online presence.
- Instagram is a social media platform designed to be used directly from your smartphone where you can share photos and videos, add captions and interact with other users. As a highly mobile and visual platform, it is a great tool for farmers.

Good news! Instagram is linked to other social media platforms, including Facebook. Once you link your Instagram and Facebook accounts, you can easily cross-post, from Instagram to Facebook, killing two birds with one stone.

Create a consistent profile

Even if you are already active on Facebook and Instagram accounts, it is a good idea to make sure that your profile is consistent across all platforms, starting with your website.

#PROTIP

If your business has a logo, use it! Upload to the round image on the upper left-hand corner of your Facebook page and use it as your profile photo in Instagram.

Website Profile

Your website should have a brief mission statement about your farm that tells visitors about yourself and answers the following questions:

- Who you are?
- What do you do?
- Why do you do it?
- Where do you do it?

For example:

Juliet's Garden is a first-generation small-scale family farm located in Hampstead, Maryland. We are committed to producing nourishing vegetables and gorgeous cut flowers through careful sustainable land management. Although not yet certified organic, our farm is working toward this certification. You can find us at farmers markets in Maryland or join our CSA.

Facebook Profile

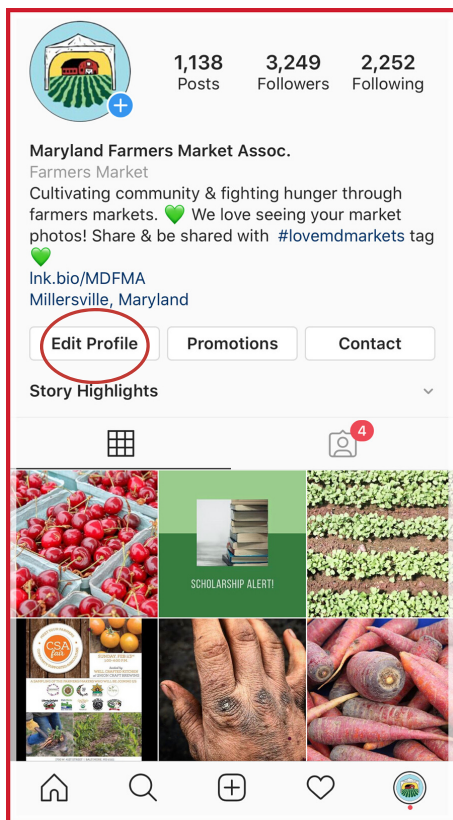
Once your mission statement is ironed out, add this to your Facebook business account in the "About" field of the About page. Note that Facebook has a 255 character limit for the "About" field so you might have to trim down your website mission statement.

For example:

Juliet's Garden is a first-generation small-scale family farm located in Hampstead, Maryland. We produce nourishing vegetables & gorgeous cut flowers through careful sustainable land management. Find us at Maryland farmers markets or join our CSA.

Be sure to fill out every field you can in the About page - it will help people figure out the best way to get in touch with you and where to find you. Depending on what type of Facebook page you have, you might have a "Mission" field and a "Story" field where you can elaborate on your business without character count limits.

#PROTIP Use Facebook's Story or Mission fields for your market schedule and information about where to find your product.



Create a consistent profile, cont.

Instagram Profile

You are much more restricted in what you can include in your Instagram profile, so you have to make every character count. You also want to make sure that your Instagram account is set as a business profile (rather than a personal one) since this will give you fields for location and contact information and access to Insights.

In order to make changes, you'll need to go into the "Edit Profile" feature. Make sure that what you write in the "bio" field mirrors what you say about your business on your website and on Facebook.

Instagram limits you to just 150 characters, so get creative (emojis can be very handy here). As a business profile, your location (City, State) should automatically appear in your profile, so you can omit that bit of information if you like.

For example:

Juliet's Garden | First-generation family farm in Hampstead, MD | Growing nourishing produce & beautiful 🌻 | Find us at MD markets & join our CSA

#PROTIP

The "Website" field in your Instagram bio is the only place that you can hyperlink in Instagram. If you put a URL in your comments, it will not be clickable. So, if you need to share a link on Instagram, for example to a special event or a fundraiser, you should put that link in your bio. If you find that you are changing this link a lot, you might consider using a tool that will allow you to associate different posts with different links. [Later](#) and [Lnk.bio](#) are good options.

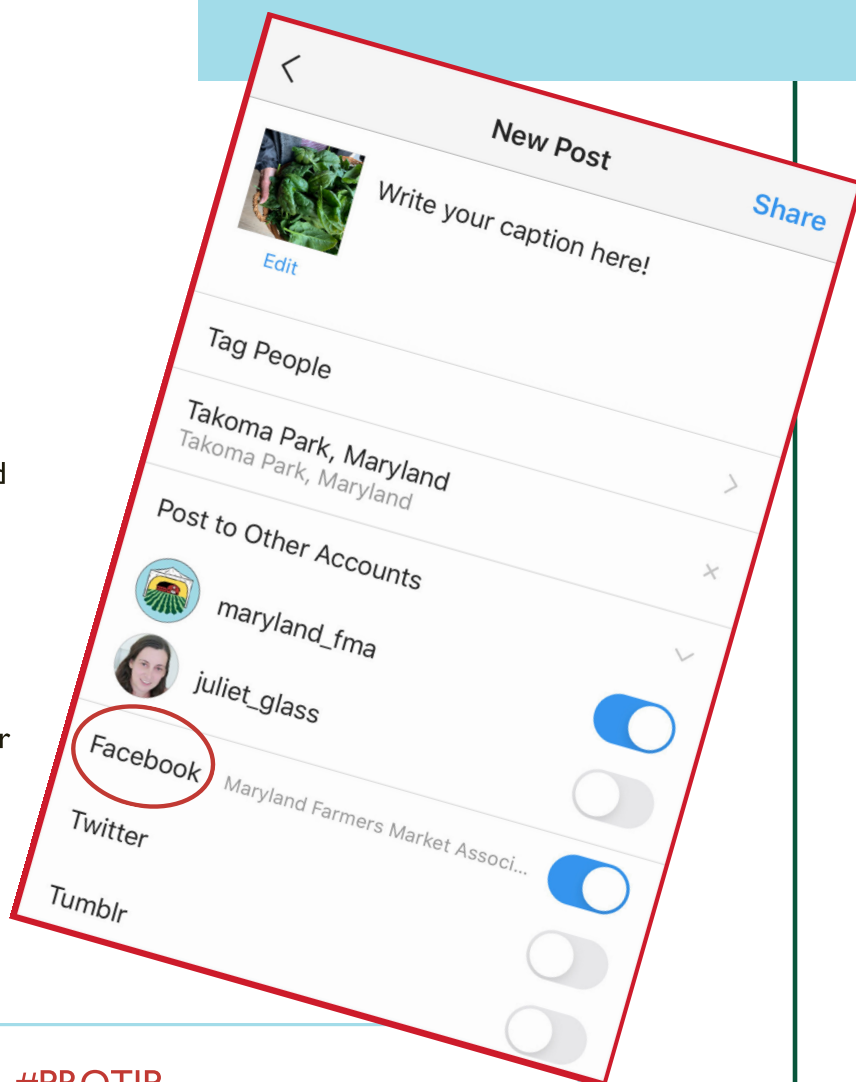
Whether you decide to post every day, or just a few times a week, it is a good idea to set a schedule and stick to it. For instance, you might plan on doing a mid-week post from the farm about what you are planting or harvesting and then a market day post.

What makes a good post? You definitely want to start with a good picture, and thanks to the ever-improving cameras on smartphones, this should be the easy part. Next, write an attention-grabbing first sentence (this could be a question), that will make your followers stop scrolling. People are following you because they like what you do, but they may not actually know what that is, so be authentic and share what it's like to be a farmer - the good, the bad and the ugly.

You should also post first from Instagram and then share this post on your Facebook page. You can do this each time you post by clicking on your Facebook account in the "Post to Other Accounts" section.

Posting guide

Now that you have that housekeeping out of the way, you are ready to start posting!



#PROTIP

Depending on what type of smartphone and version of Instagram you have, you might be able to automate cross-posting from Instagram to Facebook. Go into Settings > Accounts > Linked Accounts > Facebook and opt for Instagram to automatically share all your Instagram posts and stories to Facebook.

Posting guide, cont.

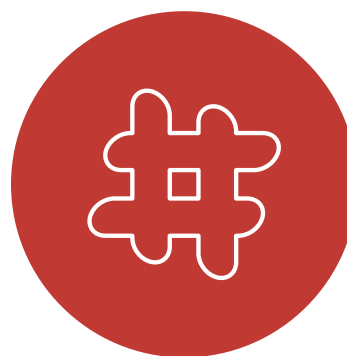
Use hashtags, but Strategically

Love them or hate them, hashtags are a big part of social media, in particular Instagram, and the deft use of hashtags will increase your engagement.

Instagram allows you to use up to 30 hashtags per post. While you certainly don't need to use 30 posts every time you post, you should use 10 to 20, depending on the post. Good news: this is easier than it sounds thanks to this great hack from [Farmhouse Creative Marketing](#).

First, in your Instagram caption (which will be shared on Facebook) use two to five relevant hashtags. As a small business, your hashtags should be niche and/or location-based and speak to your specific business. For instance, instead of #farmer you might use #MDfarmer.

Next, in an additional comment to your post, you can up to 20 more hashtags that are relevant to your post. This is easier than it sounds, but it does require some planning.



1. Start by brainstorming hashtags that are relevant to things you post about. Organize these hashtags by theme—for example, farmers markets, farmsteading, cooking, agriculture, vegetables, flowers—and then into groups of 10 or 15 hashtags.
2. Store these hashtag groups into a notes app on your phone.
3. When it's time to add more hashtags in an additional comment to a post, go to your notes app, and copy another batch of hashtags and paste into your comment.



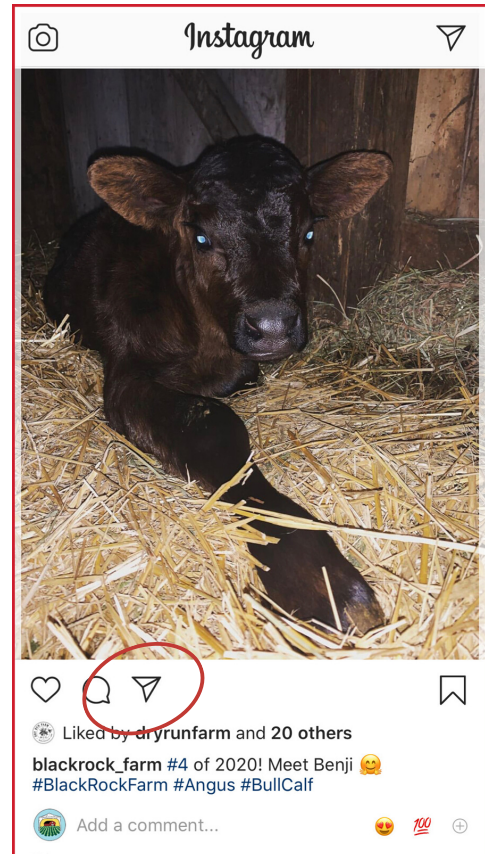
#PROTIP

Mentioning other users in your comment is a great way to increase engagement and grow your community. If you tagged a user in an Instagram post, you will have go into that Facebook post and edit their username so they are properly tagged. Instagram allows you to “tag” users in a photo, although these tags will not transfer to the post on Facebook.

What's the deal with Instagram stories?

"There are two places to post on Instagram, in your feed or in your stories. Likewise, users are looking at Instagram in two different ways - either vertically scrolling through their feed or horizontally through stories. So what's the difference between posts to your feed and posts to stories and do you need to do both? Here are some things to consider:

- Posts in your feed stay there unless you delete them. Stories expire after 24 hours (although you can save them in Highlights, and feature them under your profile permanently or until you remove them).
- For smaller business accounts, we don't recommend posting to your feed more than once a day, as it can lead to a loss in followers. However, since stories expire, you can post stories throughout the day without the risk of making followers feel like you are spamming them.
- For the above reason, stories are a good way to share a lot of content at once and give your followers a sneak peek of what you're working on at the farm or a really in-depth look at part of your business.
- Once you've linked your Facebook and Instagram accounts, any Instagram stories you post will also be shared on your Facebook page.



#PROTIP

Stories are a great way to share other Instagram users' posts in their feed. Simply go to their post and hit the paper airplane icon (see above) and then "add post to your story." You can add a comment, GIFs or tag more users. If you want the user to know that you've shared the story, you must tag them in the story.

Enough about Instagram, what about Facebook?

Cross-posting from Instagram to Facebook is a great shortcut that allows you to share new content regularly on both platforms. However, there are some things you can do best on just Facebook.

- Facebook is a great way to share other users' content - this could be a post from a market that you sell at, an event you'd like to attend, or an article that you've read.
- Whereas for Instagram, it is best to just post once a day to your feed, Facebook is a good place to post if you have a lot to say and want to do multiple posts in a short period of time.
- Although Instagram does have a direct messaging feature, Facebook's messaging features are easier to use and a great way to stay in touch with your followers. You can also link your Instagram direct messages to your Facebook account and manage all your correspondences in one place.
- Facebook's Events, Fundraisers, and Groups are tools unique to this platform that are designed to help you grow your community and your business. Use them!



Audience tracking

Both Instagram and Facebook business accounts have a built-in feature called "Insights" to help you better understand your audience reach and engagement. There are also third-party platforms that allow you to schedule posts and that give you detailed analytics of your audience reach and engagement. [Later](#) is Instagram-focused while [Iconosquare](#) covers both platforms, but neither is free.

If you don't want to shell out money for these services, you can stick to some simple tracking using a spreadsheet and the number of followers and posts on each platform once a month and tracking the change over time.

Be responsive

Whether you are posting every day or just a few times a week, it is very important for you to be responsive to your audience. This is how you build community and relationships!

If a follower leaves a comment on a post (on either Facebook or Instagram) take a moment to like their comment, to write a response, a “thank you,” or even just leave an emoji.

If you see that somebody mentions you in an Instagram story, definitely thank them and if appropriate add their story to your stories.

Sharing is caring! As you scroll through your social accounts, be sure to like other users' posts, leave comments, and share content that resonates with you.

A good way to tackle these tasks is to set aside a few times a week (or once a day!) to go through your accounts respond to your followers.



You're doing great!

You get out of social media what you put into it, so if you are being authentic and posting consistently, you will build a community. However, the powers behind both platforms are constantly tinkering with the algorithms. This means that a post that you think really speaks to your audience might not get much engagement (likes or comments). Don't take it personally - it's probably the algorithm pushing your post out of people's feed! Engagement on both platforms ebbs and flows, but so long as your audience is growing organically month-to-month you are doing something right.

Please follow us and we'll return the favor!

Facebook: @MarylandFMA

Instagram: @Maryland_FMA

Questions? info@marylandfma.org